Christ's Aſcenſion to fill all things.

Being A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Horſly-Down,

AT THE

Solemn Ordination and ſetting a-part

OF

Elders and *Deacons*,

BY THE

Church of Chriſt, there Aſſembled on that Occaſion,

Wedneſday, September 21. 1698.

By *ISAAC CHAUNCY*, A. M.

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To the Church of Chriſt, to which Mr. *Joſeph Jacob* is Paſtor.

Brethren,

HAving received and peruſed the Notes of my Sermon, Preached at your Publick Place, and Corrected them, with ſome little Inlargement of ſome Things, which (to avoid too much prolixity) I then did but touch, I have upon your Importunity

yielded to the Publiſhing of it ; and had it not been to gratifie you, I ſhould not have had the leaſt Inclinations or Motions thereunto : Wherefore if it may ſerve the Intereſt of Chriſt among you, or any others that wiſh well to Zion, *it will anſwer the ſole end, (as I am perſwaded,) of you in Printing it, which was his in Preaching it ;*

Who is your Unworthy Servant in Chriſt Jeſus,

J. C.

EPHES. IV. 10.

He that deſcended is the ſame alſo that aſcended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things.

THE Apoſtle intit'ling himſelf a Priſoner of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (being then at *Rome* in bonds) begins this Chapter with a weighty and earneſt Exhortation unto the Church of *Epheſus*, which is firſt in *general*, That *they ſhould walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called*; *i. e.* to the honour of it; which he preſſeth upon them in particular Inſtances, which concerned each Member individually, to take heed to; and the whole Body, as a Church of Chriſt in reſpect of Individuals in their mutual relations; he exhorts to theſe becoming Chriſtian Vertues, Lowlineſs, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, Forbearance; then with reſpect to the whole Body,

he exhorts them to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, ver.* 3. (for ſuch is the Church Bond or Covenant) to unity of Heart, and unanimity in both their Spiritual Church Frame and Walk, which they were ſolemnly bound unto when they joined themſelves to Chriſt and one another, to be one viſible Body. And this he doth upon a twofold account. 1. In that the holy Profeſſion and Practice leads them thereunto; *viz.* Their holy Vocation it ſelf which they profeſs to, and the Covenant of Peace they have entred into, and laid hold of. 2. In that the Grace of God diſpenſed to them, conducts and leads them thereunto, *viz.* to this Unity in the Spirit which he exhorts them to: For (ſaith he) there is one Body, and therefore but one Spirit. One Body ſhould not have contrary Spirits. And its guided but by one Spirit, the Grace of God too, and the ſame hope of your Calling, not only in your Effectual Calling, but in your Church Calling, to fellowſhip with Chriſt and one another. You all are called to look for the fulfilling the ſame Promiſes, the diſpenſation of the ſame

Grace

Grace here, and Glory hereafter. The Grace of God hath called you to ſubjection to *one* Lord, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Head of his Church; your *Faith is but one*, (*i. e.* of the ſame kind and nature, however differing in degrees); your *Baptiſm* (the Seal of your fœderal Union, and of that Faith which you profeſs to, being one of the peculiar diſtinguiſhing Priviledges given to you, and not to the World, out of the Bond of the Covenant) *is but one*; the *Name one* and the ſame that you are Baptized into; the Subjects thereof one and the ſame Perſons, ſuch as are in the Bond of the Church Covenant; the End the ſame, to ſignifie our Faith profeſſed in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt for Remiſſion, and to ſeal our profeſſed Covenant Union to Chriſt, wherein a Believer hath given up himſelf and his Seed unto the Lord. All theſe Unities are one, in *one God*, the *one Father* of every one of you thus bound together, who is above all the Gifts and Graces beſtowed on his Church; he *is through all and in you all*; he is all in all. But the Apoſtle ſaith, tho' there is a unity of the Spirit as to original kind and na-

ture in all the Grace of God beſtowed on his Churches, yet there is a difference in reſpect of degree and meaſure; *ver.* 7. *Unto every one is given Grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.* About this there ſhould be no variance or contention; becauſe it is for the profit and advantage of the whole Body, that every part ſhould have its peculiar uſefulneſs, and ſome be more, and ſome leſs uſeful according to the proportion of Grace and Gifts beſtowed on them, 1 *Cor.* 12. 4, 7. Whereupon he aſcribing to him the proportioning the different meaſures of Grace to the Members of the ſame Body, he coucheth this *Argument* to prove it, from the greater to the leſs. He that by commiſſion, and deligation from the Father, diſpenſeth all, even converting Grace for and to his Church, proportions alſo the meaſure of all Grace; but this Chriſt doth *ergo*,&c. and he proves his minor from *Pſal.* 68. 18. That he diſpenſeth converting Grace in order to Church Membership: For the Pſalmiſt ſaith, he gives *Gifts to the rebellious that God might dwell among them.* Whereupon he maketh a double commoration.

1. Upon

1. Upon the Aſcention of Chriſt, on which he ſhews his diſpenſation of Grace as Head of his Church doth eminently depend, according to the Pſalmiſt. 1. That Chriſt's *aſcention* doth neceſſarily infer his *deſcention*: For had he not been made low, he could not have been exalted or have aſcended. 2. That his Deſcention and Humiliation muſt be to the loweſt degree, unto the loweſt parts of the Earth (not of Hell); *i. e.* even unto Death and the Grave: He was humbled unto Death. And this brings us to the Text, *v.* 10.

2. The other commoration is upon the Gifts which Chriſt diverſly beſtows on the Church, as to meaſure, in the ſtate of his Exaltation as eminently belonging thereto, whether extraordinary or ordinary, and the great ends thereof, which he inſiſts upon to *v.* 14. eſpecially.

The words of the Text are a part of the Apoſtle's firſt commoration, being his Comment upon the Pſalmiſt's Propheſie of Chriſt's aſcending on high, and therefore annex'd in a Parentheſis.

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that it's his Exaltation is here meant; and he is thus exalted that he ſhould give the Gifts here ſpoken of. 1. That he that the Pſalmiſt ſaith aſcended on high, is the ſame that deſcended and was humbled. 2. He ſhews that as he was ſuperlatively humbled, ſo his Exaltation was to be ſuperlative, far above all Heavens: *i. e.* By a Metonimy, all things in the higheſt Heaven; all created Beings in Dignity and Honour; *Eph.* 1. 20, 21. 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. 3. Here is the great end of his *deſcention* and *aſcention*, (both in our Nature, elſe there could have been neither) that he might fill all things: The Margent hath it, that he might *fulfil all things*; and ſo it may be read, and differs not much from the other ſenſe given in the Text: For he dyed and roſe again, and was exalted, according to the Scriptures, 1 *Cor.* 15. 4. He fulfilled all things ſaid concerning his Humiliation and Exaltation in the Scriptures. But I conceive that his filling all things is more agreeing to the mind of the Spirit; becauſe he firſt ſpeaks moſt directly to his Vertues in his aſcending on high; and after the Text tells us more particularly how he

fills

fills his Church : For as it was for his Body's ſake that he deſcended, that he might redeem and purchaſe it ; ſo 'twas for its ſake he aſcended, that he might apply the Benefits thereof in giving forth the fulneſs of his Perſon, Relation, and Purchaſe to his Church : For indeed here the Spirit of God hath laid the heighth, eſpecially of his Exaltation, in being made Head of his Body the Church, *Eph.* 1. 21, 22. *Col.* 1. 18. You will be apt to ſay, What means all things? *Anſ.* All things ſignifie here as *Eph.* 1. 10. the *gathering all things* in Chriſt into one, and denotes two things. 1. That all things ſince the Fall are empty. Sin hath emptyed the World of all Good. In that ſtate it is in its as nothing, leſs than nothing and vanity. 2. That the nothings of the World are become ſomething by Chriſt filling of them. Hence the Church being filled by Chriſt, and made ſomething by his filling it, is *juſtar omnium*, is that only which is become of nothing ſubſtantially ſomething.

The Obſervation then is this :

Doct. *That as Chriſt came under the greateſt Humiliation, by his deſcention in*

our

our Nature, that he might purchaſe his Church; ſo he aſcended to the higheſt degree of Exaltation that he might fill his Church, and all things that concern it. He came from Heaven, and took on him our Nature in the form of a Servant. He was humbled to the Death, the Death of the Croſs, that he might redeem a *peculiar People* to himſelf. He was exalted that he might fetch us out of the Jaws of Hell and Death; that he might, like *David*, fetch back captivated ones, lead even *Captivity it ſelf captive*, and give *rich gifts of Grace and Life to rebellious ones*, that they might become fit matter for his Houſe, and he *might dwell among them.* Chriſt hath redeemed his Church, that Work is over, what is he now doing? He is at God's right-hand and in our Nature the head of it, and filling it; he hath called his redeemed ones to a ſtate of Grace; he is fitting them for Glory. The Spirit of God ſaith expreſly, *Heb.* 1. when *he had by himſelf purged our ſins, he ſat down at the right-hand of the Majeſty on high. i. e.* After he had, as our great High Prieſt, offered himſelf up a Sacrifice for Sin, what is his great concern in living

and

and dying, in his deſcending ſo low, and aſcending ſo high? It is the redeeming and perfecting of his Church. His perfecting in filling, is refered principally here to his Exaltation; *viz.* his filling with Grace, Gifts, and all the means of Grace, for *the perfecting the Saints for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying the Body of Chriſt*, &c. *Eph.* 4. 12, 13.

Under this Doctrine I ſhall ſpeak to theſe three Heads.

1. *What is that fulneſs of Chriſt from which the Church is filled?*
2. *How is the Church filled by Chriſt?*
3. *Why this filling is principally aſcribed to Chriſt aſcended on high?*

1. *Gen.* What is that *fulneſs of Chriſt* from whence the Church is filled by him?

Anſ. 1. The *fulneſs of Chriſt*, which we are here led to ſpeak of, is his Mediatorial Fulneſs, whereby he is fitted to redeem and ſave, in which he is conſtituted by his Father. As it was the pleaſure of the Father that Sinners ſhould be redeemed and ſaved, ſo it was

was to constitute a Redeemer in all fulneſs for that end. It pleaſed the Father, εὐδόκησεν, it ſeemed good to God the Father, (ſaith our Tranſlation, not without Reaſon) that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell, as *the Head of his Body the Church*, as the Context hath it; that all fulneſs ſhould be in him for us to receive of, *John* 1. 16. and there is that fulneſs of his for a Redeemer and Saviour, in his two Natures, God and Man. *The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt amongſt us, and we beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth*, Joh. 1. 14. The fulneſs of the *Godhead* dwelt in him bodily. He is a glorious and gracious God, mighty to ſave. This is a Glory as of the only begotten Son of God. He hath the fulneſs of the Divine Nature in him, *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*. He hath the fulneſs of the Humane Nature in him, that he might be capable of deſcending into the lower parts of the Earth, and aſcending far above the Heavens. He hath our Nature in as full, if not fuller perfection than ever the firſt *Adam* had; which Perfection Natural and Moral was permanent.

manent. He was that *holy thing* conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of the *Virgin*. He ſtood in all Moral Perfection, under the ſtricteſt Demands of the Moral Law. He was holy, harmleſs, and in his Nature and Life ſeparate from Sinners.

2. God hath given to him a Covenant Fulneſs. In that he was conſtituted a ſecond *Adam* he ſtood as a Publick Perſon inſtead of all the Elect, and was a covenanting Surety for them. *Iſa.* 42. 6. *God hath given him for a Covenant*, to be the *Head Covantee* with God, and to be the *Great Condition of the Covenant*, wherein the Eternal State of all the Elect is ſecured, whereby the fulneſs of Perfection is ſecured, and all Mercies are become ſure Mercies, and all Promiſes *yea and amen*. Hence he hath all *fulneſs of Impetration* in the ſtate of his Abaſement, and *of Application* in the ſtate of his Exaltation. *His Soul was made a Sacrifice for Sin, and the good pleaſure of the Lord proſpers in his hands.*

3. He is conſtituted of God, and fully furniſhed for the execution of his *Mediators Office*, in being ordained, and appointed

appointed of God, to be and to execute in our Nature the Office of a Prophet, a *Prophet like unto Moſes*, *Acts* 3. 22. from *Deut.* 18. 15. *To be a Prieſt after the Order of Melchiſedeck*, *Heb.* 7. 21. from *Pſal.* 110. 4. Never any ſuch Prieſt as he, in all reſpects; none ſo made by *an Oath* of God unto him; never any offered ſuch a *Lamb without ſpot*. God gave him the fulneſs of his *Kingly Office*; ſet his *King upon his holy hill of Zion*: Such a King as all the Angels ador'd, ſet him *upon the Throne of David*, and he reign'd *over the houſe of Jacob* (*i.e.* the Church) *for ever*, *Luke* 1. 32, 33. Such a King as is a Prieſt upon the Throne, a King of Peace, and yet ſuch a King as ſhall triumphantly conquer all his Enemies; either in a way of Grace, ſubduing rebellious Hearts; or in a way of Judgment, *breaking them as Potters veſſels*, Pſal. 45. *with his Rod of Iron*, Pſal. 2.

4. He had a marvellous fulneſs in reſpect of that *Unction* which he received *without meaſure*, *John* 3. 34. his receiving the Unction of the Spirit in reſpect of the Humane Nature; for he was anointed with the *Oyl of Gladneſs*

above

above his fellows, Pſal. 45. 8. above all the Seed of *Abraham* his Brethren that he was the firſt born of. This mighty Unction the Apoſtle tells us, *Acts* 10. 38. ſtood in two things, he *was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power*. *With the Holy Ghoſt*, in beſtowing upon him, in his Humane Nature, all excellent Vertues and Qualifications for the due and exacteſt performance of all his Offices, and ſuch a fulneſs of Grace ſo as to ſupply all his Members; as the *Oyl on* Aaron's *Head ran down to the skirts of his Garments*. 2. He was *anointed* alſo by way of *Commiſſion*. There is Commiſſion as well as Qualification requiſite to conſtitution in Office Power. *All Power is given to me in Heaven and in Earth*: The largeſt and fulleſt Commiſſion that was ever given, and the firmeſt and moſt laſting; He was made a *King for ever*, conſecrated a Prieſt by God's Oath for evermore, after the *Power of an endleſs Life*, Heb. 7.

5. Hence he is conſtituted *Head* of his Church; and in the Glory of this relation he eminently ſhines in his exalted ſtate: For the Apoſtle ſaith, he is *the Head of the Body the Church, that*

in all things he might have the prehemi-nence, Col. 1. 18. And this fulneſs is ſpecified as a great part of that fulneſs which the Father was pleaſed to place in him. Now this relation that Chriſt ſtands in, is either by an *indiſſoluble* Union, or by a *diſſoluble or diſſolvable* Union. That which is by an undiſ-ſolvable Union is the *Myſtical Relation.* Chriſt is a Myſtical Head, and the Bond thereof, can never be broken; for he is *federally united*, and he is a *vital Root* to all his Members. The Saints rooted in him, *Col.* 2. 7. He is *united not only to the Body*, but to every *particular Member* immediately by the Spirit; and laſtly, he ever was and will be their repreſen-tative Head before God, both in Grace and Glory. Again, the Relation of Chriſt is diſſoluble as Head, *i. e.* as Political Head of a viſible Church; for they ſtand his Body by Profeſſion and Covenant; Chriſt is as it were mar-ried unto them by a Publick Covenant: Which when ſuch a People breaks and apoſtatizeth from, Chriſt gives them a *Bill of Divorce*, and their *Candleſtick is removed*; he refuſeth to walk among them, and they become a *Loammi*; *i. e.*

not

not an Eccleſiaſtical People of God. A People called a Church, to which Chriſt is not, or ceaſeth to be a Political Head, is a *Loammi*. Hence a Perſon juſtly excommunicated out of a Church to which Chriſt is the Political Head, is as a Heathen or Publican. This might be much inlarg'd upon, and made moſt evident from the Old Teſtament and New: But I muſt proceed.

2. *Gen. Head.* How is the Church filled from this fulneſs of Chriſt?

Anſ. We are told, *John* 1. 16. *That of his fulneſs of Grace we all receive, and Grace for Grace.* There is no fulneſs of Grace that we have, but it's derived from him; all fulneſs of Juſtifying Grace, Adopting Grace, Sanctifying Grace, in our imperfect ſtate here, or in our perfect hereafter: His fulneſs is an overflowing fulneſs, in reſpect of Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, Strength, rich and abundant Supplies of the Means of Grace, and his Spirit to make them to profit. But it is ſaid, not only that we receive of his fulneſs, but it's added, *and Grace for Grace.* I underſtand it thus, Grace upon the ac-

count of Grace; for it is ἀντὶ χάριτος, *i. e.* all that we receive is of his fulneſs, and Grace upon the account of Grace; as all inherent Grace upon the account of Relative Grace: We receive his Righteouſneſs; but Holineſs upon the account of his Righteouſneſs, Regeneration upon the account of Juſtification, the Grace of Adoption upon the account of the Relation of Sons: *Becauſe you are Sons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, Gal. 4. 6. We are filled with this fulneſs of Chriſt.

1. Perſonally and individually.
2. Socially, as in a Body.

1. Individually, as particular Members eſpecially of the *Church Myſtical*, and as ſuch we receive of a marvellous fulneſs, ~~the chief~~; and upon the account of this Grace we receive the Grace of viſible Church Fellowſhip. This myſtical fulneſs is a fulneſs of the Spirit, and gracious Fruits thereof, *Eph.* 5. 18. be not drunk with Wine, in which is ἀσωτία, *viz.* ſottiſhneſs; and by Wine he means any temporal thing,

nor

nor be over-filled with any outward delights or ſatisfactions, *Luke* 21. 34. for there's exceſs and ſottiſhneſs in ſuch filling, but be filled with the Spirit; there's no over-filling, no exceſs no ſottiſhneſs therein. The filling with the Spirit carries not Men out of their wits, but brings them into their right minds and underſtandings. This fulneſs comes from Chriſt the head; he hath it without meaſure, we have it in *meaſure, as he pleaſeth.* Unto every one of us is *given Grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt,* Eph. 4. 7. Accordingly the Apoſtle ſaith, he that is *joined to the Lord is one Spirit,* is made one Spirit, or partakes by union of the ſame Spirit that is in Chriſt, in his meaſure, but not in that high degree or unmeaſurableneſs that is in Chriſt Jeſus; and in this union, and poſſeſſion the Spirit takes of us, we are very *paſſive* at firſt. When this Arm of the Lord is firſt revealed, and lays hold on the *handles of our locked Hearts* to open them as *Lydia*'s, with what obſtinacy and rebellion do we reſiſt him, when he comes to grapple with them? When the Spirit ſiezeth on it, to take it captive?

But yet at laſt it overcomes, and brings about the *Vital Union*. The firſt Gift of Grace to a rebellious one is the Spirit in its ſubduing operation, changing and renewing the Heart: It's impoſſible any *condition* ſhould be found in us upon which it is given; becauſe it finds nothing but *Rebellion* in us. Now this the Spirit doth before the Heart can be an habitation of God and the Spirit, or any of the gracious fruits and qualifications thereof ſpring up there. The Sinner muſt have Spiritual Life and Union to the Root, before it can have Vital Motions and Activity. Hence the firſt vital motion of the Soul and fruit of the Spirit, is Faith; whence the Spirit, from this firſt effect, is called the *Spirit of Faith*, as from the Grace of Adoption it's called the *Spirit of Adoption*. Now the Lord Jeſus Chriſt fills up this Faith of his People with his fulneſs of objective Grace, the Spirit *leading Faith into all Truth*, and bringing in Chriſt in all his fulneſs; it glorifies Chriſt, recieves of Chriſt, and is filled with him, *John* 16. 14. Hence Faith recieves, and is filled with Chriſt's imputed Righteouſneſs to Juſtification;

and

and we are ſaid to be juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the Spirit of our God; *it's God that juſtifies*, but by the Spirit, in the name of Chriſt, filling our Faith with the perfect and full imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: So likewiſe there is the filling the Soul with other Graces of the Spirit, and the filling up of thoſe Graces; it gives the Grace of Adoption, and fills it up with the gracious Relation of Sonſhip; it works Love, and fills it up with the lovelyneſs and excellency of Jeſus Chriſt; *the Love of God being ſhed abroad or diffuſed in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, that is given to us*, *Rom.* 5. 5. Chriſt comes and fills thus all things in a Believer. Had I time I might inſtance in all ſpiritual qualifications, which are empty without they be filled with Chriſt, and are originally from his Righteouſneſs, Fruits of his Righteouſneſs; and thus we are bleſſed *with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt*: All comforting fulneſs which the Holy Ghoſt, (therefore called a *Comforter*,) fills the Soul of a Believer at any time with, is from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the *Conſolation of Iſrael.* And how much

doth Chriſt fill? Some more and ſome leſs; but it's in his Wiſdom, *i. e. to a ſufficiency. We are not ſufficient of our ſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. and *ch.* 12. The Apoſtle laboured under many difficulties and infirmities, but God told him his Grace was ſufficient for him; and Chriſt fills with a ſufficiency of Grace for to profit and benefit others alſo, *Rom.* 15. 4. He filleth to an overflowing *abundantly* toward others, 2 *Cor.* 9. 8, 11. 1 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8. *Out of his belly flows rivers*, &c. *John* 7. 38.

2. There is filling from the fulneſs of Chriſt, which Believers recieve *ſocially* as a viſible Body, and it is from Chriſt conſidered as a *Political Head*; as the *Apoſtle and high Prieſt of our Profeſſion*, as the great Paſtor and Shepherd over each *viſible Fold*. Chriſt hath a mighty fulneſs in that reſpect. He hath a fulneſs of Wiſdom, Art and Skill, to build an Houſe, Riches enough to provide for it, Treaſure enough to furniſh it, Wiſdom and Power enough to govern it. I ſhall touch upon a double filling which a Church, as a Body, recieves from Chriſt.

1. In

1. In reſpect of Conſtitution.
2. In reſpect of Furniture.

1. It hath from Chriſt a full Conſtitution. Chriſt is very faithful and skilful therein, and was counted *worthy of more glory than Moſes, in that he that builded the houſe hath more honour than the houſe*, Heb. 3. 3. To which *Moſes* was but *a Servant*, ver. 5. *but Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe.* Chriſt is the proprietor, and *built his own houſe.* 1. With an unparallel'd foundation, upon the Doctrine *of the Prophets and Apoſtles; but Chriſt himſelf lyes as the corner ſtone*, Eph. 2. 20. The foundation is not only ſtrong againſt all aſſaults, that the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, but there's a fulneſs of Perfection both as to preciouſneſs: He is elect and precious; there's no Stone in the World that is ſo precious as this: He is the only foundation; *other foundation of a Church can no man lay*, 1 Cor. 3. 11. None can lay himſelf for a foundation but Chriſt alone. Man's Authority, Humane Laws, Inventions or Traditions, can be no foundations to a Church

Church of Christ. 2. The *matter* that Christ builds with, is the *professedly faithful, visibly living stones*, adjudged Members of his Mystical Body: These by his Charter he gathers together to build his Spiritual Fabricks with, in this World; such is the Prophesie of the Gospel Churches of the *Gentiles*, Isa. 54. 11. *I will* (saith the Lord) *lay thy stones with fair colours*, (making a fair laudable Profession) *thy foundation with sapphires*, (such is the Doctrine of the Apostles) &c. *thy borders with pleasant stones, and thy children shall be all taught of God*, Isa. 54. 11. 12, 13. 3. He *joints* them together in the firmest band to himself the Head, and one to another; by the unity of the Spirit in the *federal band of Peace*, makes them one Body and Spirit, *Eph.* 4. 3, 4. He joints them together so as they become *members one of another*; they are fitly joined together, *ver.* 16. yea so compacted that *each member supplyeth, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every one to the increase of the Body, and edifying it in love.* So that the Body recieves its fulness of constitution from Jesus Christ.

2. As

2. As to the *furniture* of this Political Body, it's recieved from the fulneſs of Chriſt, it's marvellous rich. When Chriſt builds a Houſe, it's for himſelf to dwell in; *I will dwell in them.* And how glorioufly is he deſcribed, *Rev.* 1. 13, 14. And will he come to naked Walls? No, he will furniſh it well, and better than his Servant *Moſes* did his Houſe; he provides to furniſh it with all ſufficient Power under him, with all means of Grace, Ordinances, Offices and Conſtitutions, all things that may conduce to its edification, by *addition of ſuch as ſhall be ſaved, and building up of ſuch to a fulneſs of ſtature.* He doth not only make them *golden Candleſticks*, but ſets up the Lights of Truth in them. 1. He hath given them all Scripture by *Inſpiration, profitable for Doctrine*, &c. 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. This is a great and rich treaſure, *John* 17. 8. *I have given to them the words which thou gaveſt me.* 2. He hath given to his Churches *Diſpenſers of the Word*; he hath given them *extraordinary* and *ordinary* Miniſters for that end; *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets*, &c. But you will ſay,

ſay, theſe were only given to the firſt planted Churches, as their perſonal Miniſterial Offices in an extraordinary way was; but I ſay their Miniſtry in *their Doctrine* is given down to all the Churches ſucceſſively; that Doctrine which the Churches had in their days, is given to the Churches now, and in the hand of the Spirit; and the Churches are built upon it as the Doctrine of Chriſt, *Eph.* 2. 6. Again Chriſt is furniſh'd with a fulneſs of *Office Gift*. When he is pleaſed no longer to continue to qualifie and commiſſionate extraordinary, he continues to give Gifts in a ordinary way and commiſſion, to *labour in the Word and Doctrine of his Apoſtles*, and to *rule*, and ſuch as may govern his Churches, all which are *Presbyters*, the Paſtor Teachers, and Ruling Elders which concur with the other and help in Government. Chriſt hath given other Officers alſo which are not to rule and govern, but to regard the external concerns of the Church in ſupport of Ordinances, which Profeſſors now a-days are too apt to neglect, from too much of the ſpirit of the World that prevails upon them: Where-

Wherefore Chriſt provided not only for the Being, but alſo for the Well-being of his Churches, having never intended that viſible Churches ſhould have their ſtanding and abode in the World without Charge. Chriſt alſo hath given to each Church, power to call and ordain their own Officers, and to none elſe; neither to the Pope, Biſhops, or Presbyters of other Churches; and hath inſtituted, that a Churches calling their Officer, their ſolemn and publick Election of them, with Faſting and Prayer, is their *Ordination*, and there is no need of Laying on of hands, take ſome Reaſons of what I ſay briefly. 1. There is no Inſtance in the Word of God, that Impoſition of Hands was uſed in the Primitive Times, for Ordination of ordinary Elders, that in *Acts* 14. 23. was only lifting up of Hands by way of Suffrage in Election. 2. When laying on of Hands was uſed, it was by extraordinarily Inſpired Perſons, and not by all of them neither, for *Philip* had not the Power of laying on of hands. 3. Impoſition of Hands was for extraordinary Occaſions and Ends, and the Spirit commanding it, and accompanied it, in beſtowing

ſtowing extraordinary Gifts. 4. The thing ſignified, and accompanying it, ceaſing after the Apoſtle's day, it was but an empty Sign, and therefore the Uſe of that Rite falls of courſe, as the Uſe of the Brazen Serpent did, tho' ſome went a whoring after it as to a Holy Relick, till *Hezekiah*'s days, who therefore brake it in pieces. 5. Laying on of Hands, is no where called Ordination in Scripture, neither is there any thing to prove it ſo. 6. If there be any ſuch Ordination, then the Brethren, where there's no Elders in the Church, ought to do it; for the Elders of another Church have no right to do it, as they have no power no not to Vote there. 7. Chriſt doth not fill his Church with things Uſeleſs and Impertinent, for that which conveys neither Gifts to qualifie for Office, nor Power to exerciſe an Office, is uſeleſs and impertinent in Ordination. It qualifies not with any extraordinary Gifts all muſt grant, not with ordinary Experience enough witneſſeth; Why are there ſo many Hundreds that are thus ordained, yet unqualified, or no more qualified than before? It gives not power to exerciſe an Office in a Church, if it doth,

doth, why have not they power who are ordained, to exerciſe their Office where they pleaſe? Beſides, thoſe that have no power in a Church themſelves, can give no power to another in that Church; but the Elders of other Congregations, have no power in a Church not theirs, not ſo much as to give a Vote, how much leſs to ſet an Officer over them?

8. If Impoſition of Hands be grounded on Scripture, then Deacons of the Church ought to be thus ordained, for the Apoſtles (*Acts 6.*) laid their Hands on them; but they that will have this ſo Sacred a Rite, take it to be too high for meer Laymen, as they call them to have.

9. Many learned and able Men, that would not be againſt this Ceremony all together, have yielded that it's a thing indifferent, *not eſſential to Ordination*, but that if Hands be laid on a Man, he is never the more ordained for it, and if not laid on, he is never the leſs ordained, it may be uſed, and may not. If ſo, I ſay two things, 1. Why do Men ſay, ſuch are no Miniſters not ordained, which by their own Confeſſion have all the Eſſentials of Ordination, let them prove then

then Impoſition eſſential, or hold their peace, when others do not uſe that which they yield to be an indifferent Rite. 2. If Chriſt be a Political Head, and Lord of a Church, I cannot believe that it becomes His Majeſty in His aſcended State to fill his Houſe with Lumber, ſuch Solemn Ordinances as we may (at pleaſure) take and uſe, or throw out of Doors.

10. There is as much reaſon, or more, for continuing other Primitive Ceremonies that accompanied the beſtowing the extraordinary Gifts of thoſe Times, as for continuing Impoſition of Hands, *viz.* Waſhing the Feet, and Anointing, and if any deſire a proof of it they may have it.

11. The uſing this groundleſs Ceremony, hath been much occaſion of Litigation and Contention, laying a Stumbling-block before the Ignorant People, filling of Men with a Conceit of a Miniſterial Power given them this way, which Chriſt never did ſo beſtow; and divers other ill Conſequences which will be too long to name now. But to haſten and return to Chriſt's filling his Churches and furniſhing of them.

As

As Chriſt hath furniſhed his Church with Officers, ſo with Gifts for Edification, means of Grace, gracious Gifts, and Gifts for working or increaſing Grace. The Apoſtle inſiſts largely upon it, 1 *Cor.* 12. *Rom.* 12.

3. Chriſt hath given Seals of the Covenant to the Church, and to none elſe. If Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper be Seals of the Covenant, and two of thoſe high Priviledges that he hath bleſſed his Churches with, then they belong to the Churches only, and not to the World; for God never gave Seals of the Covenant to viſible non-church Members. Chriſt fills the Church, and not the World, with theſe ſacred things.

4. He gives Keys to the Church. Chriſt hath not built a Houſe to lye open to the Street, for all perſons to go in and out at pleaſure; Churches ſhould not be thorow-fairs. Neither hath he committed the ſole diſpoſal of the Keys to any Diotrephes, neither left the people to ſcamble for them to ſerve the diſorderly and ungovernable ſpirits of too many Church-Members. What harmony συμφίνησις between Chriſt

and *Belial*; 2 *Cor.* 6. 15. *i. e.* What conſonancy can there be between Chriſt the governing head, and a people that will not be governed? For *Belial* ſignifies a perſon without Yoke or Government; one that will not obey them that have the rule over him by Chriſt's Conſtitution and the Churches, nor ſubmit to the Rules of Order which Chriſt hath commanded.

5. All the Ordinances of Chriſt are given for edification of the Church; they all come out of the Treaſury of his Fulneſs, Praying, Preaching, the Seals, ſinging of Pſalms, and to be conſtantly attended upon by a Church of Chriſt; becauſe as they proceed from Chriſt's fulneſs, ſo they are of a filling nature in reſpect of Grace, therefore called the means of Grace: They are as the golden Pipes that conveyed the golden Oyl into the Candleſticks, *Zech.* 4. 12.

6. He furniſheth the Houſe with his gracious Preſence; and this indeed is the higheſt Furniture: This is of the moſt filling nature, it fills all other holy things, and it fills the Hearts of all in the Houſe: This makes the Church

all

all glorious within. When *Moſes* had finiſhed the Tabernacle, and ſet it up with all its Furniture according to the Pattern, it is ſaid, *a Cloud covered the Tent, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle*, Exod. 40. 34.

3. *Gen. Why is it aſcribed to the Exaltation of Chriſt, eſpecially, that he fills all things?*

Anſ. *Rea.* 1. Becauſe the Exaltation of Chriſt is the indiſpenſable complement of his Redemption. The Redemption of Chriſt is not compleated without his aſcending on high; and he cannot ſo actually fill his Church, as Redeemer, till he ſtands in the Fulneſs and Glory of all his Redemption. He was delivered up to *Priſon and Judgment*, becauſe of our Sins; but raiſed again, and taken from Priſon and Judgment, *becauſe of our Juſtification*, *Rom.* 4. 25. The Church could never *have been juſtified without Chriſt's Exaltation*; and therefore could never have arrived at the fulneſs of any Grace, in our ſtate here or hereafter. It is true he was made *perfect through Sufferings*; *i. e.* ſo far as he was to be perfected by

Suffering; but Perfection through Suffering was not ſufficient to make him the *Author of Eternal Salvation* to all thoſe that he ſuffered for; he muſt alſo triumph at God's right hand, that the *good pleaſure of the Lord might proſper in his hand.* He was a Prieſt by Sacrifice, he muſt be alſo by Interceſſion; he was a conquering King by Death, but he muſt alſo ſit down on the Throne, that he might reign in an endleſs Life; and therefore deſcribes himſelf thus to the Church, *I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I live for evermore,* Rev. 1.

2. The filling all things, here ſpoken of, lyes upon the *Diſpenſation of the Spirit* unto the Goſpel Churches in an eminent and peculiar manner, beyond all Effuſions that was before, which he calls the *baptizing with the Holy Ghoſt and with Fire*; the *Promiſe* of the Father, which Chriſt was not to recieve as the filling and diſpenſing Head of the Church, till his advancement unto *God's right hand* in our Nature: Hence he tells the Church, *Acts* 1. 4. that this they muſt wait for; and accordingly at *Pentecoſt* it was performed, when

Chriſt

Chriſt *receiving this Promiſe* filled his Church: *Acts* 2. 33. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt hath ſhed forth this, that you ſee and hear.* Now this great filling diſpenſation was not only in regard of *extraordinary Gifts*, which were to continue but for a while, for the firſt preaching of the Goſpel and plantation of the firſt Churches, but in regard of the ordinary and laſting power and operation of the Spirit in effectual Grace to Converſion and Edification; for immediately ſo many thouſands were converted at that one Sermon of the Apoſtle, abundantly more than were by all Chriſt's Miniſtry when upon Earth: And Chriſt tells his Diſciples, that the Holy Ghoſt could not be given in the Goſpel fulneſs till his Aſcenſion; *John* 16. 7. Why? Becauſe he could not come to fill them with Goſpel fulneſs of Conſolation, that *their joy might be full*: For their Faith muſt be eſtabliſhed in this as a fundamental Point, and ground of Conſolation, that Chriſt was raiſed from the Dead, and exalted to God's

right hand, *to be a Prince and a Saviour*, (not but that he was ſo before) now in a more eminent manner to give Repentance and Remiſſion; and therefore we find that the Apoſtles ſtill in their Miniſtry gave witneſs of the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Lord, *Acts* 4. 33. for the unbelieving *Jews* knew Chriſt was crucified; but it was the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion that converted ſo many. Now they were filled by Chriſt aſcended on high, not only to converſion in his *leading Captivity captive*, and giving *Gifts to the rebellious*, (for ſuch they were who crucified the Lord of Glory) but alſo unto God's dwelling among them; for they were added to the viſible Church, confirmed in that ſtate to a conſtant waiting and attending on God in the uſe of all the means of Grace; *Acts* 2. 41, 42. The Spirit alſo (as of Glory) reſted on them to ſtrengthen them in the day of perſecution, and ſcattering by it, and to reſiſt even to Blood as *Steven* did. Alſo we ſee how it remained afterward in their regathering into many Churches, and the Reſt that they had for ſome time following,

following, *Acts* 9. 31. Thus we ſee the glorious effects of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and his receiving then the Promiſe of the Father; which was, that upon the offering up himſelf a Sacrifice, he ſhould ſee *his Seed, and the good pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hands.*

3. Becauſe to the Aſcenſion of Chriſt did eſpecially belong the *execution of his Offices* by way of Gift, the day of his Humiliation was a day of emptying himſelf in regard of his foregoing Glory, that he might fill himſelf with Mediatorial Fulneſs, have a Perfection by Suffering of Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice, and of procurement of Good for his Seed; this was a fulneſs by *Impetration*: But his filling his Church is the giving forth of this fulneſs in a liberal and bountiful application. Chriſt's Humiliation was his day of getting an Eſtate for his Church, his Exaltation is the day of laying forth, and beſtowing it upon us, and in that reſpect it is the day of the gladneſs of his Heart; for whereas in his Abaſement he had wherewith to offer, ſo now in his Exaltation, having made

the Purchaſe, he hath enough to give to the filling of thoſe which he hath purchaſed with his Blood.

4. Becauſe now it was that the Government was actually on his Shoulders in our Nature, *Iſa.* 9. 6. and ſo as it ſhould go on to an endleſs increaſe on the Throne of *David*, he received a Commiſſion before, but *opens his Commiſſion* at God's right hand, *Rev.* 5. and takes to his Royal Dignity in governing the Church and World: He is now become the head of all Rule: He is far above Angels (though once a little lower than they, in our Nature infirm and ſuffering) but now far above them, the Heavens, and all Principalities and Power: The Son in our Nature was never thus advanced before. And now the Government being come into his hands, he hath a ſpecial regard of filling and inriching his Church as the great concern of his Exaltation. 1. Becauſe his Church is the ſpecial object of his Love, he loved it ſo as to dye for it, and if ſo, then to live for it; if to ſhed his Blood for it, then ſure ſo as that by his Life he might fill it. 2. The great Pleaſure of the Father

ther is anſwered in it; which was not only that he ſhould dye for his Church, but that he ſhould fill it. 3. To ſhew the faithfulneſs and conſtancy of his Love, *that whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end*: And Chriſt now in his exalted ſtate, ſtands in the higheſt capacity to do it, in that he hath not only purchaſed an Eſtate for his Church, but will give Poſſeſſion; alſo he hath not only given them right to a good Eſtate by his laſt Will and Teſtament, ſealed by his Blood, but doth alſo undertake to execute his own Will in his Life. 4. That his Church may have a Throne of inriching Grace to have continual reſort to; for from thence he ſupplies them in all their need, *Heb.* 4. 14, 15, 16. 5. Becauſe he ſtands in the ſame Relation to the Church in his Exaltation as in his Humiliation, and therefore will fill it up as he did that; and this he doth in filling of it out of the rich Treaſury of his Fulneſs, *Heb.* 2. 18. being able to ſuccour them in their greateſt neceſſities. He hath a natural Relation to them, *Heb.* 2. 14. and a fœderal Relation to them, *ibid.* He is related

related as a Repreſentative of them upon all accounts unto God.

APPLICATION.

Uſe 1. This ſerves in the firſt place for *Conviction*, to convince a Natural Man of his ill ſtate and empty condition. Thoſe that are without Chriſt, are empty of all ſpiritual good things: They may be filled with all manner of Sin and Wickedneſs, *Rom.* 3. 9.—19. but are not filled by Chriſt; they are aliens from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, [*i. e.* a viſible Church ſtate], and why they are without Chriſt, and therefore without the Promiſe, without God and without Hope, *Eph.* 2. 12. All things that Chriſt fills not are nothing, and worſe than nothing. The World, ſo far as it is without Chriſt, is an empty thing, a mere nothing.

2. It may teach us that many profeſſing Believers are in this reſpect but in an ill condition, in that they are not Church-Members. You ſay you believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Is he not the head of the Body, and are you not of the Body? Yes, you ſay you

are

are of the Myſtical Body: Who knows that? But can any be of the Myſtical Body of Chriſt, and not deſire to be of the Political Body of Chriſt? Do you believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and not deſire to be partaker of his fulneſs? Which thou canſt not do out of Church-fellowſhip. You live without a great part of the fulneſs of Chriſt, upon an Heath, in a Deſart and Wilderneſs. They that profeſs to have Faith, and can live out of Church-fellowſhip any time, having opportunity to joyn themſelves to their Edification, their Faith is much to be queſtioned; becauſe all Chriſt is precious to him who hath once taſted that the Lord is gracious. It's not a little danger for a Sheep to be out of the Fold; and it's a great ground of ſuſpicion, that that's no Sheep that chooſeth rather to herd with the Goats.

3. It ſhews the Vanity of ſuch as pretend themſelves Churches of Chriſt, and are not of his Building: That have not Chriſt for their Foundation, nor Saints by Calling and Profeſſion for their Matter, nor a ſolemn Bond of Peace for their Form; but are built

on

on Humane Authorities, and are guided by ſuch Inſtitutions. Doth Chriſt fill the Houſes of Strangers to the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, doth he furniſh ſuch Houſes? Doth he dwell in them, or walk in them, doth his Glory fill ſuch Tabernacles? What uſe is a Church of if it be not Chriſt's, and he fills it not? If there be never ſo great a Company in it, it's an empty Church. Hence as Chriſt's Houſe is of another Building from Man's, ſo if it be of Chriſt's Building, and in ſome meaſure nigh the Pattern, it's very injurious to Chriſt, and prejudicial to his Glory, to furniſh it otherwiſe than with his Furniture, to diſpenſe with his Government, and to introduce Forreign Laws or Inſtitutions: And while Churches do ſo, they do but hang by the Feet in Paths of the Wilderneſs, and are often benighted by Antichriſtian Darkneſs.

4. This diſcovers alſo the ſad condition of ſuch as are, or have been, true Churches, and are fallen from their firſt Purity and Spirituality, to a Carnal, Formal, Worldly Frame of Spirit. Such Churches Chriſt ſharply reprehends,

hends, *Rev.* 2. & 3. and threatens to leave them, and to Unchurch them. And it's great ground to think ſo of any Church, when the pieces of Timber and Stones of which it is built, ſcatter up and down from the Miniſtry and Ordinances thereof, and regard not to keep up the Honour of Chriſt there, nor that Covenant that bound them thereunto. Will Chriſt dwell in ſuch *crank-ſided* Houſes? Again when they are weary of the Proviſion Chriſt hath made for them, and are ſtill turning aſide to the flocks of their Companions? Moreover, when a Church becomes ungovernable, and will not obey ſuch as have the Rule over them, Chriſt will not be there long; for he will have Order and Government in his Houſe: there is no Agreement between Chriſt and *Belial*. Likewiſe, when Churches grow corrupt, by reaſon of an ill management of the Keys, Chriſt cannot endure a foul Houſe. Laſtly, when a Church falls to Strifes and Contentions, a Houſe divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand. When the Unity of the Spirit is departed by breaking the Band of

Peace,

Peace, the Staff of Beauty and Staff of Bonds are broken, and Chriſt will leave the Houſe to fall. It's no new thing for Churches to decay, and come to nothing; at leaſt not to be Chriſt's by their Apoſtacy from their Profeſſion. Viſible Churches are ſuch as ſtand bound to the Political Headſhip of Chriſt by a profeſſed Bond, which Churches have broken, and may ſhamefully break, and Chriſt will caſt them off. It behoves Churches to beſtir themſelves when they ſee the Glory ſtanding over the Threſhold, as it ſeems to be with many now a-days. Time was when Chriſt fill'd the Houſe, but now is emptying it, and with-drawing from it.

Uſe 2. I ſhall conclude with a word of Advice *to this Church*; and let me ſpeak to you as you are a Body, and to each Member thereof as particularly concerned; and let me ſpeak as the Apoſtle doth in this Chapter, *Walk worthy* (that is, to the Honour) *of your Vocation wherewith you are called.* As you are called in the inward and *effectual Calling*, or in your *Church Calling*, as

as called to be Members of a viſible Church, your Calling, in both ſenſes, requires your walking to the Honour thereof; which is to the Honour of Chriſt who hath called you. Conſider that your Calling is *high*, *Phil.* 3. 14. Effectual Calling is *high*; it is from Darkneſs to Light, from Death to Life, from the Kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of Chriſt; it is to high Preferment, to ſit together with Chriſt in Heavenly places. Your *Church Calling is high*, it is to *fellowſhip in the Goſpel*, Phil. 1. 5. to *fellowſhip with the Son of God*; 1 Cor. 1. 9. *Faithful is he that hath called you to the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* What that the great God ſhould be real in this Call; yea, faithful to you, to call you to have fellowſhip with his only begotten Son, the Heir of all things, to have fellowſhip with our Saviour, and Redeemer, and Lord. If he had ſaid, he hath call'd us to be Servants unto him, and to wait upon him, it had been high; but it is comprehended in the Expreſſion, for our Service to Chriſt is freedom, and waiting upon him is, in a way of holy Ordinances, fellow-

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ſhip with him. Nay, your fellowſhip is *high*; for it is with *the Father alſo*, 1 *John* 1. 3. yea, it's the fellowſhip of *the Spirit* alſo, *Phil.* 2. 1. Sure you ſhould highly prize your Calling, and preſs forward towards the Mark, the Price of this *high Call*, the *hope that is laid up for you in Heaven.* But you will be apt to ſay, our Effectual Calling into the *Grace of God is high*, but when were we called to Church Member-ſhip? If we did think God had called us to this, we ſhould prize it. *R.* If God hath effectually called you into his Grace, he hath alſo called you to *Church fellowſhip* at the ſame inſtant; he hath not only called you to be his, but to be *profeſſedly his.* You will ſay, you are called to have fellowſhip with God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Spirit; if ſo, the Apoſtle *John* ſaith, you muſt have fellowſhip with thoſe that have *fellowſhip with God*; which cannot be underſtood but of ſtated Church fellowſhip. And I pray what follows? *Ver. 6. If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lye, and do not the truth.* And doth not he that walks out of Church

Church fellowſhip walk in *darkneſs*? Doth not ſuch an one by his walk give his Profeſſion the lye, by his Practice *in not doing the Truth*? You ſay you believe in God, you have received Jeſus Chriſt; ſhew thy Faith *by doing the Truth*: So ſaith St. *James*, chap. 2. 17, 18. Is not this truth, that it's every Believer's Duty to joyn himſelf to a viſible Church? And if ſo, then he that ſays he believes, and continues a non-member, gives himſelf the lye, becauſe he doth not the Truth. Thoſe converted to the Faith of Chriſt by *Peter*'s Sermon, *Acts* 2. they were immediately added to the Church. And what is that *ver.* 49. but a clear proof of this Light of Truth, *The Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* Did not the Lord call them to Church-Memberſhip in their Effectual Vocation? Hence their joyning to the Church is called *adding to the Lord*, Acts 5. 14. and 11. 24. This might be much inlarged upon; and there is great need of it this day, Profeſſors looking upon Church-memberſhip as ſo indifferent a thing. I might add with many other

things, That Chriſt leading Captivity captive, in converting your rebellious Hearts, is for this end, that he may have Church-fellowſhip with them: So ſaith the Pſalmiſt, —*that he may dwell among them.*

2. Walk very *profitably* in Church-fellowſhip; receive and profit your ſelves, and profit one another. God teacheth to profit in Churches; they are his *Academies*: The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is conſtituted our great Tutor in Churches; he is the great *Apoſtle of our Profeſſion.* What doth that mean? Is it not that Chriſt teacheth his Houſe? And for this end among others, he fills his Houſe with his Spirit, *the Spirit of Truth to lead into all Truth,* Truth after Truth; you are not capable of receiving all at once: But he teacheth nothing but Truth; and if you learn any ſaving Truth aright, it's the Spirit that teacheth it; you ought to be growing and thriving Believers in God's Garden; *you are God's Husbandry*: Herein Chriſt tells us his Father is glorified in your bringing forth much Fruit, *John* 15. He ſpeaks of a Church there very plainly.

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plainly. Then do you ſo profit each one, as that each Member be profitable in his place. The Apoſtle ſhews the reaſon of Chriſt's filling the Church with diverſity of Gifts and Graces, 1 *Cor.* 12. and in different meaſures to ſeveral parts; it's that there ſhould be a common contribution to the good of the whole, from each part, according to its meaſure, and that there ſhould be no Schiſm in the Body; there is ſomething that every Member is to do for the good of the whole, but they are not to rob one another neither of their peculiar Offices or Gifts, nor envy one another, but each wait upon his own, *Rom.* 12. The Foot is not to pretend to ſeeing, nor the Hand to hearing, *&c.* but each wait upon his own Office or Gift for the good of the whole, and honour of the Head.

That ſuch profiting may be, take two or three words of Advice.

1. Make not fellowſhip in the Goſpel, a cloak for a Worldly Mind, or ſtep for to get into Worldly Intereſt or Advantages; there is nothing baſer

than this; 'tis below a Man, much more below a Chriſtian. Such as are ſo full of the Spirit of the World can never think to be filled with the Spirit of Chriſt. Some will ſay, or the Devil ſuggeſt, Church-memberſhip is in vogue; he hath no eſteem that is not of a Church; ſome one may ſay, I am poor, and the Church will maintain me; another, I hope to get a good Trade by it; ſuch and ſuch will be my Cuſtomers: This is no other than to play *Balamites* in Religion, and ſeek for the wages of Unrighteouſneſs, 2 *Pet.* 2. 15.

2. Make it your great buſineſs to attend upon the means of Grace that God hath choſen for you, and you have choſen with ſerious and due deliberation, and covenanted to ſet under: Say *this* is the Houſe of God, wherein I am one Stone of the Building: Here I am knit to Chriſt the Head in Joints and Bands, as alſo to my fellow-members: This is my Houſe wherein I muſt walk with God; as I have received Chriſt for my Political Head here, ſo I muſt walk in him here. It is a wondrous Church-ruining corruption now a-days, that Church Members are ſuch

ſuch ſtragglers, and runagates, not mindful of their Duty to God, Relation to their Brethren, or the *ſolemn Covenant* they have made. Surely if an ordinary Houſe-keeper ſhould run about from Houſe to Houſe, and neglect his own Family, all would ſay he was an ill Husband, and that he and his Family would ere long come to ruine. This Trade eats out the Life of Religion, let Men pretend to what they will for it. Tranſplant an Herb or Tree every day or week, though you remove him into never ſo good Ground, it will come to nothing: And that is one reaſon that ſo many of our Church Members wither away; they walk not in the *Communion of the Holy Ghoſt*, and Chriſt refuſeth to meet them and bleſs them at home or abroad, and it may be leaves them at laſt to a ſpirit of giddineſs in Judgment; *that in ſeeing they ſee not, and in hearing they hear and not underſtand*, &c.

3. Indeavour to keep up the exerciſe of perſonal Graces ſuitable to Church Membership. The Apoſtle in this Chap. *ver.* 2. inſtanceth in divers, *Lowlineſs*, *Meekneſs*, *Long-ſuffering*, &c.

See alſo *Phil.* 2. 1, 2, 3, 4. I cannot here inlarge; only I ſay, Do not think you are come into a Church of glorified Saints, but that you are joined in fellowſhip with Men of much Infirmity and Weakneſs, as well as your ſelf, labouring under and incountering with many Sins and Corruptions; and do not pleaſe your ſelf, that none of thoſe Corruptions which are in individual Members, may not ſometime or other be very troubleſome to the whole: And therefore there is great need of the fulneſs of the Grace of Chriſt upon this account.

4. Keep up the Spirit of Communion. If a Church be the habitation of God by the Spirit, it's by his Spirits being a Spirit of Communion. Church Communion is the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt; it's a Spirit of Love, Peace, Conſtancy, Unanimity, as we find there was *Acts* 2. 46. and *Acts* 9. 31. Keep up a Publick Spirit; not only ſeek the good of thy ſelf, but of others; ſeek the Peace of *Jeruſalem*. This is a Spirit like Chriſt's, who did ſo much, and all (I may ſay) as Mediator, for his Body the Church. This was

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the Spirit of the faithful of old. How were *Moſes*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Daniel*, yea all the Prophets and Apoſtles, concerned for the Church, as their Prayers, Thankſgivings, Labours, Counſels, and their continual Actings, ſhew.

There is but a word remains to thoſe which are called into Office.

As to the Paſtor, he is to be faithful to the Charge and Work which God hath committed to him: He hath a charge of Souls, for which he muſt give an *Account*: He is overſeer of a Flock, which he is to watch over and feed, *Acts* 20. 28. The Word of God is that they are to be fed with. It's a belying of Chriſt to preach that for his Doctrine which is not ſo. Chriſt's Doctrine muſt be preached purely, without mixture of any thing elſe with it: 2 *Cor.* 2. 17. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Not as many, who corrupt the Word of God*: But it's ill rendred in the Text, it's better in the Margent, *Dealing deceitfully with the Word of God*, καπηλεύοντες. The Word of God *cannot be corrupted*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 25. but it may be blended and mix't; as deceitful *Vintners* uſe

to do their good Wine : And this deceitful handling or mixing the Word of God may be, 1. By mingling falſe Doctrine with it, which is not according to the Analogy of Faith ; or wreſting it from its true ſenſe and meaning, which it never intended. This I take to be the ſtealing the Word, *i. e.* from its true ſenſe and meaning, which the Prophet ſpeaks of, *Jer.* 23. 30. when Men will make the Word of God to ſerve their own turn ; when it may be it's on his Neighbour's ſide which he preacheth againſt. If Men uſe the Word of God ſo, it will burn or bruiſe their Fingers : *For is it not a Fire, is it not a Hammer?* ſaith the Prophet in that place. 2. It's to mingle the Word of God with the froth of our own Brains and Fancies, to dreſs it up in meer Pageantry, to make a ſhow of it, in untoward and ſtarch'd Geſtures or Language, whereby the itching Ears and Imaginations of the carnal ſeekers may be tickled ; which the Apoſtle propheſies of, and is come to paſs in our days, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. The Apoſtle cryes down this way of Preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2. 1. in the excellency of Humane

mane Speech or Wiſdom: But any Food goes down alike with ſome ſort of perſons, provided it be well diſh'd, and finely ſet out. 3. There's the mingling the Word of God with our own corrupt Paſſions and Affections, in an irritating and provoking manner, it's injuring of it as to its ſucceſs. The Apoſtle ſaith it ought to be ſpoken in wholeſome, (the word is) Healing or Healthful words. Well, the Apoſtle 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. tells us, *We have renounced, or abdicated, the obſcure things of ſhame, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending our ſelves to every ones Conſcience in the ſight of God*: Not to palliate Mens Conſciences in pleaſing them according to their Luſts, but to commend our ſelves as to our *Faithfulneſs*; for it's as in the ſight of God. Hence a Paſtor ſhould have an obſerving Eye upon his People that he preacheth to, to proportion his Doctrine according to the ſtate of his Flock, to deal with them accordingly; though this way of plain and down-right dealing with Mens Conſciences, as the caſe requires

it, is often very ill reſented; and every Perſon whoſe Conſcience is ſore will be angry, and ſay, he means me, and he rails, and I will hear him no more, *&c.* Sometimes there is need of rebuking ſharply, to ſtrike with the edge of the Sword of the Spirit, and not to give a flat, and leave Conſcience to eſcape. It's not always the worſt ſign of the effect of the Word, when Men complain of the blow; there's more hopes of a good effect upon a complaining Conſcience than of a ſeared. There is great need of much skilfulneſs in the Word, rightly to divide it, and to give each one his portion, and in ſeaſon. But who is ſufficient for theſe things? The ſufficiency is of God. There is great need of the fulneſs of Chriſt here, and ſurely of the great Conduct of the Spirit. It's good that a Miniſter be very humble, and think that he hath been too fooliſh, one way or other, in handling the Word of God: But yet take comfort in this, that God who is wiſer than Man, is pleaſed *by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe*; with ſuch Preaching as is not only fooliſh in the Judgment

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of the wiſe Men of the World, but ſuch as is accompanied with manifeſt Miſtakes and Infirmities in the Preacher; that the Veſſel may evidently appear to be but of Earth to himſelf and others, and God may have the honour of the excellency of the Power, and not we; 2 *Cor.* 4. 7.

There is a *Watch* committed unto the Church, a Watch belonging to the whole Church. It concerns every one to watch, leaſt the Thief break into the Houſe. What Chriſt ſays unto one, he ſaith unto all, *watch*: Yea, and that leaſt any miſchievous Root ſpring up within, every one ſhould look to himſelf, and look about him upon this account, *Heb.* 12. 15. But the ſpecial Watch by way of Office, Rule and Government, belongs to the Elders, who ſhould watch and rule well and diligently; they ſhould ſhew themſelves good Men, and good Rulers. Here is a great deal of the conduct and fulneſs of the Spirit for the management of this Relation; for many times there are very unruly Members to deal with, that will not *obey them that have the Rule over them*; but if they cannot

cannot rule the Elders, will take the ſtout, leap over the Hedge, and be gone. Will any ſo readily leave their own dwelling Houſes, and be gone, when any thing diſguſts them? Is the Church, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, any leſs your Houſe than your natural dwelling Houſe? But ſuch Practices belong to ungovernable Servants, not to Children: For Chriſt ſaith, *The Servant abides not in the houſe for ever*; and they go out from the Church, becauſe they were never truly of it. The ſpecial Care and Charge of Elders, in a way of Rule, is the due management of the Keys for the Church, and to go before the Church therein, by a Spirit of Wiſdom. Let not Elders think that they have the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect to deal with, and rule; but ſuch as by reaſon of Sin and Infirmity, have need of Rule: Neither let them think that they ſhall only meet with Sins of meer Infirmity, which will be paſſed over with much eaſe by a Chriſtian Spirit, but that ſometimes in the moſt flouriſhing and beſt ordered Churches, there will break forth (the great and ſubtle Adverſary being reſtleſs

leſs in his Enmity to the pureſt Churches of Chriſt, and in the moſt Angellick Dreſs oft-times) great Scandals, or caſes of greateſt difficulty, ſo threatning to the Honour of Chriſt, and to the ſtate and ſtanding of the Church, as will make them ſweat, and their Hearts and Heads to ach, wherein they will need the mighty filling of Jeſus Chriſt by the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, Courage and Self-denyal.

And let not thoſe that are ruled, think that the Rulers are glorified Saints or Angels, without their attending Corruptions and Infirmities; they are Men of like Paſſions with your ſelves, and Chriſt hath in his Wiſdom plac'd them over you, as beſt for you in this ſtate: But have a care of *two things* which pride of Heart and the love of ſelf-juſtification, and the ignorance or forgetfulneſs of our Relative Duties and the Fifth Commandment, is apt to lead you into. 1. To juſtifie your ſelf againſt the Rebukes of the Church by the Elders, from ſomething of fault that you will find in others of the like nature: And 2. When they go, according to their place, to convince and admoniſh you of an evil, you

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fall a dealing with and admoniſhing of them for their faults in dealing with you. Such carriages are very unſeemly in a Church, and very diſhonourable to Chriſt's Government. Know that thoſe who make it ſo much their buſineſs to throw Dirt upon the Elders, they throw it on the great Shepherd; and likewiſe foul their own Houſe as faſt as the Elders (whoſe buſineſs it is) can make it clean; and know the whole Church ſuffers; for the Elders are Elders to the whole Church, and Churches ought to be more concerned for their Honour (unleſs they prove themſelves to be of *Diotrophes* Spirit) than they themſelves be.

Laſtly, As to the Brethren which you have now choſen into the Office of Deacons (they are no Ruling Officers, as ſome have of late miſtaken) they are only to wait on the Tables of this Spiritual Houſe, to take care of the Externals, the neceſſary Charges that Chriſt hath appointed his Churches to be at, for Support of Ordinances, Relief of the Poor, Contributions to other Churches Neceſſities, and ſuch like. I hope you have proved them, and find them faithful. 1. They are the

Churches

Churches Stewards as to its Treaſure, to be expended for its uſe as occaſion requires, and to give Account thereof to the Church. 2. There is another Duty too, which I concieve Deacons now a-days are too deficient in, and that is this; As it is their Buſineſs to inſpect the Neceſſities of the Church, and give Account thereof to it, ſo it's their Duty to ſpeak plainly and boldly on the behalf of Chriſt and his Church, to ſuch as they find too narrow ſpirited and ſtrait handed towards the Church, not contributing proportionably to their Ability; whereby others are unjuſtly burdened, and they eaſed. I ſuppoſe this is that boldneſs in the Faith which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 *Tim.* 3. 13. *They that miniſter in the Office of a Deacon well, they get to themſelves a good degree or advance, and much boldneſs in the Faith that is in Chriſt*: *i. e.* Thoſe who are faithful and diligent in the truſt committed to them, being truly ambitious to promote the well-being of the Church, they gain boldneſs and courage in the execution of their Office; and believing that the well-being of the Church, as to Externals, is the

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mind of Chriſt, they take to themſelves, through the Supply of the Spirit, *great boldneſs in this Faith*, and are not aſhamed to tell the greateſt and richeſt in the Church of their Duties, and to ſpeak boldly to them: For indeed, to the ſhame of many Rich and Great Men profeſſing Godlineſs, may it be ſpoken, inſtead of being promoters of the Intereſt of Chriſt in Churches, by their backwardneſs and ſtingineſs they are exemplary hinderers thereof. Theſe had need to have ſome, that have more than ordinary boldneſs in the Faith, to tell them plainly how much they diſhonour that Name they profeſs.

I ſhall conclude where I began; I beſeech you Elders and Brethren, and every Church Member, that being thus highly related to Chriſt, and one another, as hath been ſaid, that you walk anſwerably to the Vocation wherewith you are called, &c. *that your Converſation be as becomes the Goſpel; that you ſtand faſt in one Spirit and one Mind, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel; and that your order and ſtedfaſtneſs of Faith in Chriſt, may be a rejoycing to other Saints and Churches now, and yours in the day of Chriſt.*

FINIS.